

## Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FEA-01 /098 W

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R 100740Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7377

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIBREVILLE 0254

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, GB

SUBJ: GABONESE PETROLEUM RESERVES

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED IN LOCAL PRESS INTERVIEW, GOG  
MIN STATE FOR MINES AND ENERGY MBOUY-BOUTZIT CONTENTED  
THAT GABONESE PETROLEUM RESERVES ARE CURRENTLY SUFFICIENT  
TO ASSURE PRODUCTION OVER NEXT 35 YEARS. HE ADDED THAT THIS  
DID NOT MEAN PRODUCTION WOULD STOP AFTER THAT TIME, BUT ONLY  
THAT KNOWN RESERVES DID NOT PERMIT LONGER-TERM PROJECTION.  
HE CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT MAJOR EXPLORATION EFFORT  
BEING UNDERTAKEN BY COMPANIES AT URGING OF GOG WILL DISCOVER  
ADDITIONAL RESERVES AND ENSURE PRODUCTION OVER EVEN LONGER  
PERIOD OF TIME. END UNCLASSIFIED

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COMMENT: SUBJECT OF GABONESE  
PETROLEUM RESERVES IS FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED, BUT DOES NOT LEND  
ITSELF TO DEFINITIVE ANSWER.  
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MINISTER'S ESTIMATE OF 35 YEARS' PRODUCTION AT CURRENT

LEVELS FROM KNOWN RESERVES SEEMS HIGH, JUST AS JUDGEMENTS THAT RESERVES WILL RUN OUT IN 7 TO 10 YEARS APPEAR TO US UNDULY PESSIMISTIC. KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES IN OIL INDUSTRY HAVE RECENTLY ESTIMATED TO US THAT PRODUCTION CAN BE SUSTAINED AT EXISTING LEVELS FOR 15 TO 25 YEARS FROM KNOWN RESERVES, AND COMPANIES APPEAR MODERATELY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF NEW DISCOVERIES. SOME OF LATTER WILL BE NEEDED TO REPLACE EXISTING FIELDS DURING THIS TIME FRAME, BUT OTHERS COULD INCREASE BOTH POTENTIAL PRODUCTION LEVEL AND TOTAL LIFETIME OF GABONESE OIL INDUSTRY. GLOOMIEST NOTE HAS BEEN SOUNDED BY SOME ELF-GABON OFFICIALS, WHO TELL VISITORS THAT PRODUCTION CANNOT BE ASSURED BEYOND 5-7 YEARS. HOWEVER, COMPANY'S INVESTMENTS IN NEW FACILITIES BELIE THESE STATEMENTS, AND TECHNICIANS ON GRONDIN FIELD HAVE REPORTED LIFE EXPECTANCY OF 25 YEARS FOR ITS 3-4 MILLION TON ANNUAL PRODUCTION. THUS, MORE OPTIMISTIC ESTIMATE FROM NON-SELFSOURCES SEEMS TO REPRESENT MOST REASONABLE PROJECTION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE. STEIGMAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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